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SUBJECT: CHAD: DAS SWAN MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

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NDJAMENA 00000278 001.2 OF 002

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) James C. Swan April 2, Chad Foreign Minister

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Allam-mi explained that he had not yet briefed the Cabinet on his meetings in New York and therefore could not give an update on whether a green light would be given to the UN advance team. He reiterated that any international force should be composed of gendarmes (who could certainly protect themselves) and focus on refugee and IDP protection. Including a border presence in the mandate was a red-line for Libya (and appeared to be one for Chad as well.) However, Allam-mi explained that the mandate could always be built on later. Concerning Chad's internal political situation, the Foreign Minister indicated that the State of Emergency could be lifted for some areas, but not in the east of Chad. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Bureau of African Affairs DAS James C. Swan met with Chad Foreign Minister Allam-mi April 2 in N'djamena. The Ambassador and DCM (notetaker) accompanied DAS Swan. DAS Swan opened the meeting by explaining to the Foreign Minister that the visit to Ndjamena was intended to provide him a better understanding of the situation in Chad, as well as to deliver some messages. The first issue was Sudan. Swan noted that both the U.S. government as well as U.S. public opinion were increasingly concerned by the lack of progress in Darfur. The United States was approaching the problem from two fronts: working with the rebels to encourage them to form a united negotiating front with the Government of Sudan (GOS) using the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) as a base, and by pursuing deployment of a hybrid peacekeeping operation in Darfur. On November 16 it appeared that progress had been made in gaining GOS acceptance of a hybrid force, however, now it appeared that Khartoum had acted in bad faith and had no intention of allowing such a force in Sudan. Consequently the United States was running out of patience.

¶3. (SBU) Secondly, concerning the proposed international force for Chad, DAS Swan explained that the United States strongly supported a robust international force in order to protect the humanitarian operations and affected refugee and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) populations in eastern Chad. The United States had been encouraged by the Foreign Minister's statements in New York (reftel) that Chad was prepared to discuss this issue. And finally, his third message was that the United States continued to vigorously support democratic reform in Chad and welcomed the European Union (EU) initiative to open up the electoral process and hold free and fair elections.

¶4. (SBU) Foreign Minister Allam-mi responded that the situation in Darfur had leached into Chad. He complained that Chad was the victim of an internal Sudanese conflict; why was Chad being identified as a country requiring a peace-keeping force or support for democracy when Sudan was the problem? Since independence Chad had experienced non-stop struggles for power; Chadian rebels were only settling tribal or family differences. He argued that Chad needed to defend itself and needed support for that defense -- anarchy would not be a good environment in which to promote democracy.

¶5. (SBU) Allam-mi confirmed that Chad had agreed to delay elections and reschedule the electoral census. EU support would be helpful in reforming the electoral commission. He also agreed that some aspects of the State of Emergency could be lifted (including allowing greater freedom of the press -- as long as the media agreed not to be "apologists" for rebels.) However, the State of Emergency would need to be maintained in the east.

¶6. (SBU) Turning to the question of an international force in eastern Chad, Allam-mi stated that Chad wanted the force to provide security for refugees, guarantee the civilian nature of the camps, and prevent recruitment. Chad envisioned a force that would secure the camps, provide aerial surveillance of the area and ensure communication among UN forces. Questioning why the UN Security Council insisted that the gendarmes have protection when they themselves were armed, he signaled flexibility on the number of forces and on the question of robust armament of gendarmes. He also signaled flexibility on a separate mandate for operations in the Central African Republic.

¶7. (SBU) However, according to Allam-mi, it was not possible to open up the terms of reference to include "maintaining peace" when there was no peace agreement to maintain. He pointed out that Sudan and Libya saw the force

NDJAMENA 00000278 002.2 OF 002

as a "Trojan Horse" -- a back-door entry way into Darfur. These countries argued that the Tripoli Agreement was sufficient to secure the area. Allam-mi noted, as an aside, however, that Sudan was still not living up to its promises as far as the agreement. And there were some Libya observers in the east, but all they were doing was "collecting information." That being said, Libya had tried to play a constructive role, as had SPLM Leader Salva Kiir in uniting Darfur rebels. Libya had also put pressure on Sudan -- in turn, Sudan had stopped its "war machine." However, the Janjaweed were still active in attacks in Darfur and in Chad, according to Allam-mi.

¶8. (SBU) Allam-mi argued that, rather than siding with Sudan, the United States and the rest of the international community (in particular, Egypt, Libya and Qatar) should be working to isolate Sudan. Chad -- on the front line -- needed to be prudent and not take any unnecessary risks. In response to a question from DAS Swan as to how to bring Libya on board with the international force, Allam-mi stated that mandate would have to exclude control of the border with Sudan. (Comment: this appeared to be a red-line for Chad as well. End comment). The international force's mandate should be limited to protecting humanitarian areas and actors. Securing the camps and IDP's could be a first step --the mandate could always be developed.

Next steps

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¶9. (SBU) The next steps, according to Allam-mi would be finding a common position within the Chadian government. Having just returned to Chad on March 30, he had yet to make a report to the Council of Ministers on his visit to New York and therefore had no news on whether Chad would accept the

visit of UN Advance team or on other follow-up steps.

¶10. (U) DAS Swan cleared on this message.

¶11. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

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